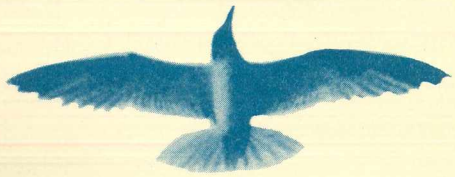
FIRE ISLAND National Seashore



a proposal

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MARCH, 1964

A Report on the Proposed

FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

New York

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
National Park Service
March 1964

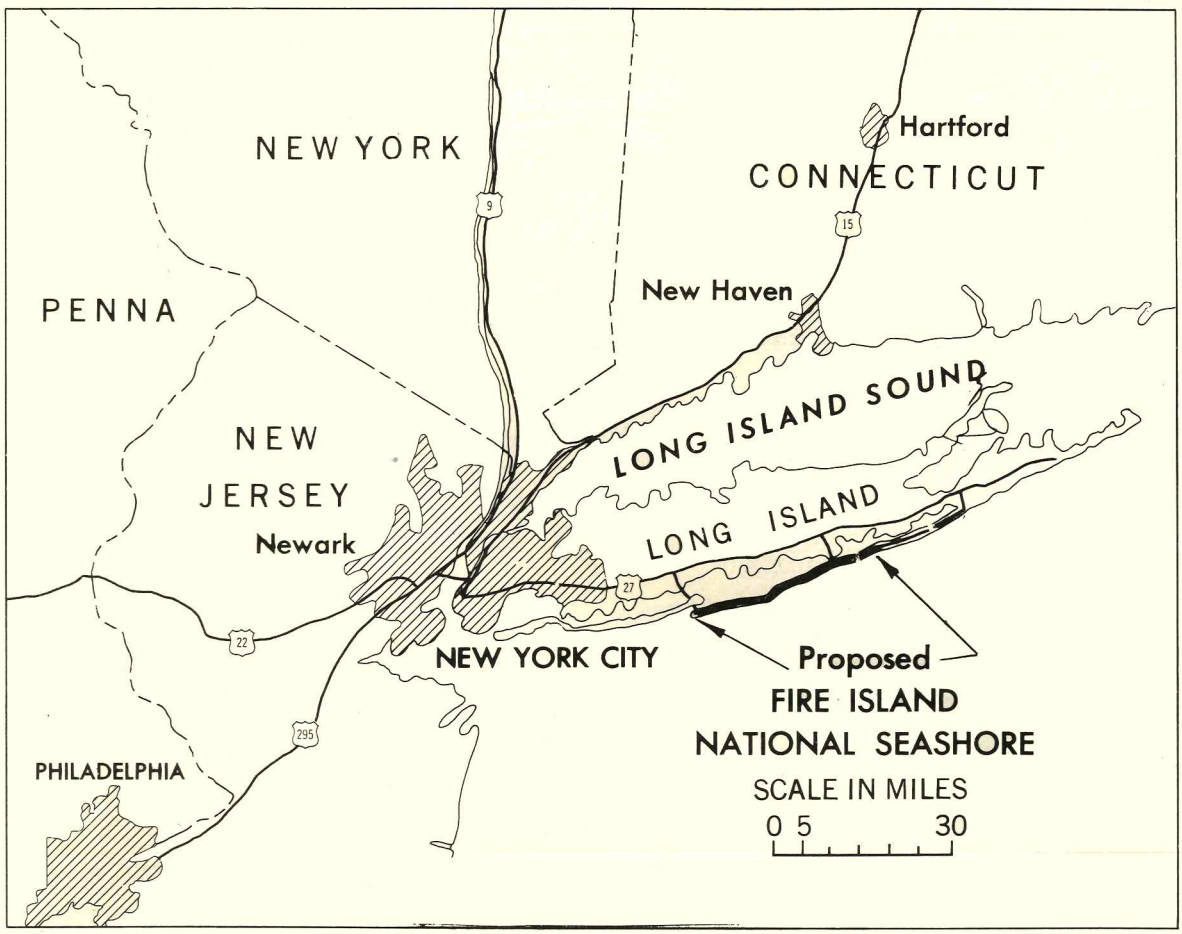


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Photo by
Francis A. Leigh

LOCATION MAP



INTRODUCTION

Fire Island first came prominently to public attention as an area needing conservation in 1908, when New York's Governor Charles Evans Hughes authorized the use of the Fire Island reservation, a one-half mile strip east of the Fire Island lighthouse, as a State park. In 1924 the Federal Government granted four miles of the western tip of Fire Island to the State of New York.

The National Park Service, in its 1955 Atlantic and Gulf Coast Shoreline Survey, identified Fire Island, together with the Shinnecock Inlet area, as one of the most important remaining undeveloped shoreline areas in the eastern United States. As a result of this report, a bill was introduced in the 86th Congress to establish a Fire Island National Seashore but no action was taken.

Following the severe storm of March 1962 that did tremendous damage to the shoreline area of the Atlantic Coast between New York and North Carolina, Governor Richard J. Hughes of New Jersey called for a conference of 12 State Governors at Atlantic City to discuss the problem of protecting exposed shoreline areas from future storms. Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, speaking at the conference, urged that immediate thought be given to dedication of certain shoreline areas for public use. At his direction, a task force of State and Federal officials made an aerial reconnaissance of the shoreline from eastern Long Island to Virginia. The task force report recommended that portions of Fire Island, two miles of seashore across Moriches Inlet and five miles of seashore around Shinnecock Inlet, both to the east of Fire Island, be protected for public recreation purposes.

Following that report, other proposals were made to protect and develop Fire Island and several bills were introduced in the Congress to establish a Fire Island National Seashore. Because these proposals varied as to the extent of protection and development, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the National Park Service carried out studies to determine the need for a National Seashore in this location and if needed, the extent and the form it should take.

Those studies indicated that a National Seashore was warranted and, initially, an area encompassing 52 miles of barrier beach from Fire Island Inlet on the west to the Village of Southampton on the east was considered suitable for National Seashore purposes. Subsequent discussions and studies, however, have indicated that an area of lesser scope encompassing some 33 miles of seashore, will meet National Recreation Area criteria.

At this point, there appears to be almost unanimous support for a Fire Island National Seashore. Unresolved questions relate principally to (1) the extent of such a National Seashore, (2) equitable provisions concerning the improved and unimproved private property involved, and (3) a program for the development and management of the area for National Seashore purposes.

This is a report prepared for the Secretary of the Interior by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. Its purpose is to explain how a Fire Island National Seashore can serve to meet various outdoor recreation needs, not only of the locality but those of the entire Nation.



SUMMARY

The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the National Park Service recommend the establishment by act of Congress of a Fire Island National Seashore encompassing all of Fire Island, one and four-tenths miles of undeveloped barrier island east of Moriches Inlet, and several small nearby islands in Great South Bay and Moriches Bay. It is recommended that this area be administered by the National Park Service.

The Fire Island National Seashore, as proposed by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and National Park Service, meets all of the "primary" criteria and all of the applicable "secondary" criteria for National Recreation Areas as set forth in Policy Circular Number 1, issued on March 26, 1963, by the President's Recreation Advisory Council.

Approximately 16 million people live within a 100-mile radius of this proposed National Seashore. Nearly one-third of the Nation's population lives within a day's drive. There are few places in the United States where as great a demand exists for the kind of outdoor recreation opportunities available at the proposed Fire Island National Seashore. In this same area there is a shortage of public seashore areas to meet the demand even though the city and State have made considerable contributions.

At present, private development in this area is limited primarily to several small but rather intensively developed communities in the western half of Fire Island. Some smaller, less intensive developments are scattered elsewhere on the Island. Together, these communities occupy about one quarter of the land and they encompass 2,460 residences and 64 small business establishments.

Outside these communities, large sections of Fire Island still are relatively undeveloped and possess outstanding recreation resources. These include picturesque natural dunes, marshes full of wildlife, a rare American holly forest, and some of the Nation's finest beaches. Some of the beach areas already are in public ownership --in The Robert Moses State Park and The Smith Point County Park--and the State of New York and Suffolk County are developing these parks to accommodate intensive use of the beaches.

There is a need, however, particularly in the highly populated New York metropolitan region, to provide the public with an opportunity to enjoy the natural values associated with the seashore. These opportunities, fortunately, still exist on Fire Island, but much of the fine beaches, dunes, marshes, and the holly forest are in private ownership and therefore vulnerable to intensive residential and resort development. If acquired and managed for National

Seashore purposes, these lands, together with the State and county parks and the existing communities would be protected and could accommodate some six million recreation visits by the public every year.

It is proposed by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the National Park Service that the Fire Island National Seashore protect a maximum amount of recreation resources for the public and, at the same time, cause a minimum disturbance to the existing communities and improved private property.

Under this proposal, the relatively undeveloped lands suitable for National Seashore purposes have been identified and designated. In turn, boundaries have been designated for certain developed communities. Within these communities, owners of both improved and unimproved property could retain and develop these properties in accordance with local zoning regulations approved by the Secretary of the Interior. Outside the designated communities, the Federal Government could acquire all undeveloped land, but improved property could be retained by its owner as long as its development and use are in accordance with the approved zoning regulations and is compatible with purposes of the National Seashore.

If the National Seashore is established, most of Fire Island would be used only for those activities compatible with the maintenance of the natural scene. Development for intensive use would be restricted to a limited number of locations, including Robert Moses State Park and Smith Point County Park. These latter areas, like all other existing public holdings, could be acquired by the Federal Government only with the consent of the administering agencies. They are included within the boundary and concept of the National Seashore, however, in order to provide for a maximum amount of coordinated planning and management.

Overall, the National Seashore would provide ample opportunities for swimming, picnicking, fishing, hunting, clamming, crabbing, hiking, camping, boating, beach combing, nature study, and other outdoor activities. Several of these activities are not available at other public seashore areas in the region.

Access to the various points of interest on Fire Island would be available to recreation seekers along a bayside interpretative hiking and bicycling trail. Shuttle ferries would provide direct access to several points along the bay shore not now served by ferries. No road would be built along the length of Fire Island.

Like most barrier reefs along the Atlantic Coast, Fire Island has a continuing shore protection problem. Vegetation keeps the dunes relatively stable, but they are always vulnerable to severe storm action. It is anticipated that the Corps of Engineers, which has authority for shore protection, will evolve a protective plan compatible with the National Seashore.

PUBLIC SEASHORE NEEDS

Use of the Nation's shoreline for recreation is of vital concern. Because of its fixed supply and limited extent, the shoreline is both a unique resource and a scarce commodity. Approximately 90 percent of the Nation's ocean shoreline is in private ownership, around 7 percent is in public recreation areas, and about 3 percent is restricted to military use.

Public use of shoreline areas is confronted by the following problems: (1) the privately owned shoreline is not generally available for public use; (2) much of the available public shoreline is not close enough to where people live to be widely used for recreation; (3) some of it is already over crowded. Both intensively developed recreation areas as well as those still in their natural condition are needed.

Current outdoor recreation trends indicate strongly that the demand for recreation shoreline will be many times greater in the future than at present. As the population increases and interest in water-based recreation mounts, the already heavy recreation use of water resources will reach critical proportions.

The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission recognized this situation and recommended that "Immediate action should be taken by Federal, State and local governments to reserve or acquire additional water, beach and shoreline areas, particularly near centers of population."

New York Region

Ocean front recreation activities are by far the most popular forms of outdoor recreation in the New York area. Use of public beaches is heavy and continues to increase each year. It would grow even more rapidly if adequate public beaches were available to accommodate those desiring to use them. Intensity of the public's use of the beaches in the New York region may be judged by 1960 figures. These show an average of 1.6 million visits per mile of public recreation shoreline.

Figures for 1959 show nearly 90 million visits were made to county and municipal beaches in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. These visits were concentrated at public recreation areas where shoreline represents only 5 percent of the total recreation shoreline in the 3-State area. The remainder of the shoreline suitable for recreation in these three States is privately owned--roughly 1,120 miles of the total recreation shoreline of 1,197 miles.



Smith Point County Park on a July weekday.

The New York region's only extensive remaining ocean front suitable for public recreation is in Suffolk County. There, some 60 miles of shoreline are relatively undeveloped. Thirty-three miles of this are recommended for inclusion in the proposed Fire Island National Seashore.

Long Island's Recreation Resources

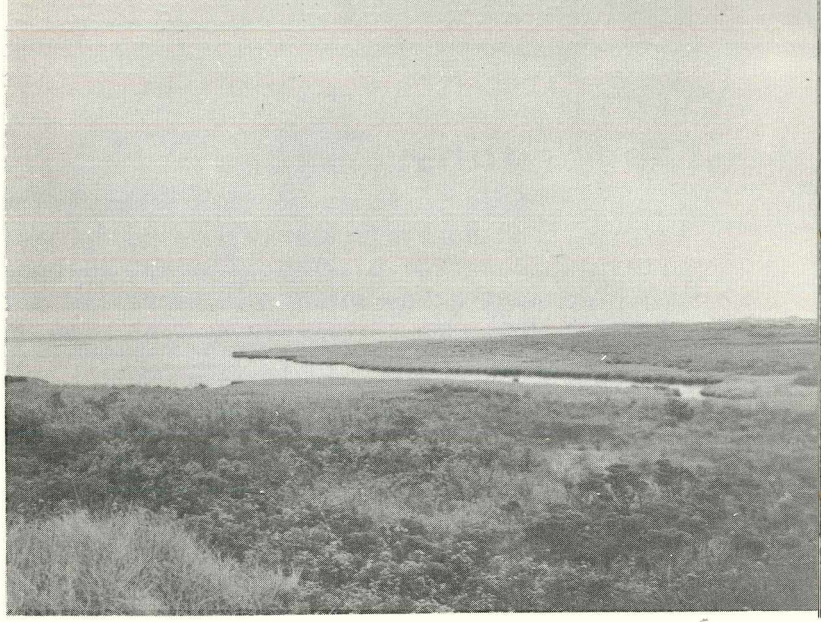
While much of the New York region's shoreline has recreation value, not all of the shoreline is equally desirable for outdoor recreation. The north shore of Long Island, for example, is highly indented with bays and coves. It is primarily a low bluff-type shore.

In contrast, Long Island's south shore--including Fire Island--is entirely a sand beach, backed by low sand dunes. The barrier beaches are cut in several places by large inlets opening to extensive, shallow, marshy salt-water bays.

Of the three types of shore--bluff, marsh, and beach--the most popular for recreation is the sand beach. Less than one-third of New York's recreation shoreline is classified as beach.

At present, Long Island's State parks provide most of the public shore recreation opportunities on the Island. The opportunities provided in these parks, however, are focused principally on concentrated use. There is a need in the highly populated New York metropolitan region to provide the public, as well, with an opportunity to enjoy the natural values associated with the seashore.

Fire Island can accommodate large numbers of visitors at existing State and county parks. It also can provide much-needed opportunities for extensive recreation activities that require natural and uncrowded conditions.



Bayside marsh a mile east of Whalehouse Point.

DESCRIPTION

Location and Access

Fire Island lies off the south shore of Long Island within Suffolk County, New York. The barrier reef, of which Fire Island forms the major part is separated from Long Island by shallow Great South Bay and Moriches Bay, varying in width from 500 feet to 5 miles. Fire Island proper is about 31 miles long.

The area proposed for a National Seashore encomposes all of Fire Island, a portion of the barrier beach east of Moriches Inlet, and certain small adjacent islands (see boundary and development map). About 5,700 acres of land would be included within the boundaries.

The western end of Fire Island is about 50 miles from the center of New York City. It is easily accessible to the metropolitan New York area by the Long Island Railroad and a system of highways and expressways extending eastward across Long Island. A bridge at Smith Point County Park connects the eastern portion of Fire Island to Long Island. A new Robert Moses Bridge leading to Robert Moses State Park (formerly Fire Island State Park) will be dedicated in the Spring of 1964 and will connect the western end of Fire Island to Long Island proper.

Topography

Seen in cross-section, Fire Island is composed of beach, foredune, back dune, trough or low sandy area, and salt marsh. This pattern varies from place to place. Although sand and mud flats are found on the bay side, salt marsh is not always present. Scattered dunes in various stages of stabilization occur back of the foredune.

The Island varies in width from one half mile to less than 200 yards. It is fragile, at the mercy of the elements and man. Although some portions of the foredunes reach a height of about 30 feet, most of the Island is only a few feet above the sea.

Except for the two bridges connecting it with the mainland, Fire Island is still without paved roads. Likewise, there is no paved road in the county owned area east of Moriches Inlet. Four-wheel drive vehicles can traverse the Island, but standard automobiles are limited now to the parking area at Smith Point County Park and will be restricted to the paved roads and parking areas at the Robert Moses State Park when the bridge to that area is opened.

Development

In spite of the limited access, however, some 2,460 private residential and 64 commercial structures already have been built on the island. Most of these are located in the western half of the Island between the Robert Moses State Park and the Sunken Forest in a chain of closely adjacent communities that include Kismet, Saltaire, Fair Harbor, Atlantique Ocean Beach, and Point O'Woods. From this point east the communities of Cherry Grove, Fire Island Pines, Water Island, and Davis Park are generally smaller and spaced more widely apart. Elsewhere on the Island are some 110 scattered cottages, most of which have been built by "squatters" who do not have title to the land.



Typical development and sand stabilization fences at the community of Fire Island Pines



Scientist examining beach plant west of Moriches Inlet

Plant Life

Fire Island is of special interest to the botanist and ecologist. Along the upper beaches, beyond the tide line, are found at least six characteristic seashore plants. West of Moriches Inlet, circular patches of the succulent seabeach sandwort can be observed. Elsewhere the rare seabeach amaranth is found.

On the foredune, beach grass, beach plum, bayberry, and other thicket-forming shrubs help stabilize the sand. The shrubs here are often stunted. Behind the dunes, these plants are less affected by salt spray and grow to near normal heights. They are joined there by pitch pine, red maple, and other kinds of trees, particularly from Point O'Woods to Pelican Island. The foremost section of woodland is the Sunken Forest, located immediately east of the Point O'Woods community, an area of mature and contorted holly, red maple, black gum, and other tree species. In the shady, moist recesses of this unusual plant community are found a number of species rare to barrier beaches.

Along the bay shore, pure stands of reed grass grow as tall as a man. Several more plant communities, including cordgrass, other marsh grasses, and rushes complete the vegetation on Fire Island. Sea lettuce, widgeon grass, and eel grass are important elements of the marine flora on the bay.



Marsh and scrub area east of Point O' Woods



Animal Life

A great variety of animal life is found on Fire Island and in the surrounding waters, including crabs, clams, oysters, mussels, snails, sea squirts, marine worms, marine fishes, reptiles, waterfowl, shore birds, wading birds, land birds, and mammals.

In the shallow bay waters, bluefish, fluke, winter flounder, and blow fish are found in significant numbers. On the ocean side of the Island some of the better known species are striped bass, king fish, bluefish, mackeral, weakfish, and fluke.

From October to March the bays are important wintering grounds for waterfowl on the Atlantic Flyway.

Small breeding populations of ducks and geese live on the bay waters. European mute swans, originally imported by private owners, now make their homes in the relatively wild domain of the Island and are an accepted part of the waterfowl community. Various other water birds thrive in the area, including the black skimmer, common tern, least tern, and black-crowned night heron. The first three of these nest on islands and spoilbanks in the bay; the fourth nests in colonies in the pitch pine and other trees on Fire Island.

A number of whitetail deer remain on the undeveloped portion of Fire Island, along with foxes and small mammals.

Climate

The tempering influence of the Atlantic Ocean helps to give the proposed National Seashore area a relatively mild climate. The temperature averages 35 degrees in January and 72 degrees in July. Extremes beyond these figures are of short duration. The Island averages 170 clear days, 97 partly cloudy days, and 98 cloudy days each year. Southampton's 43.35 inches of average annual precipitation exceeds the State's average by four inches. Prevailing winds are from the west, with occasional northeast winds during the winter months.

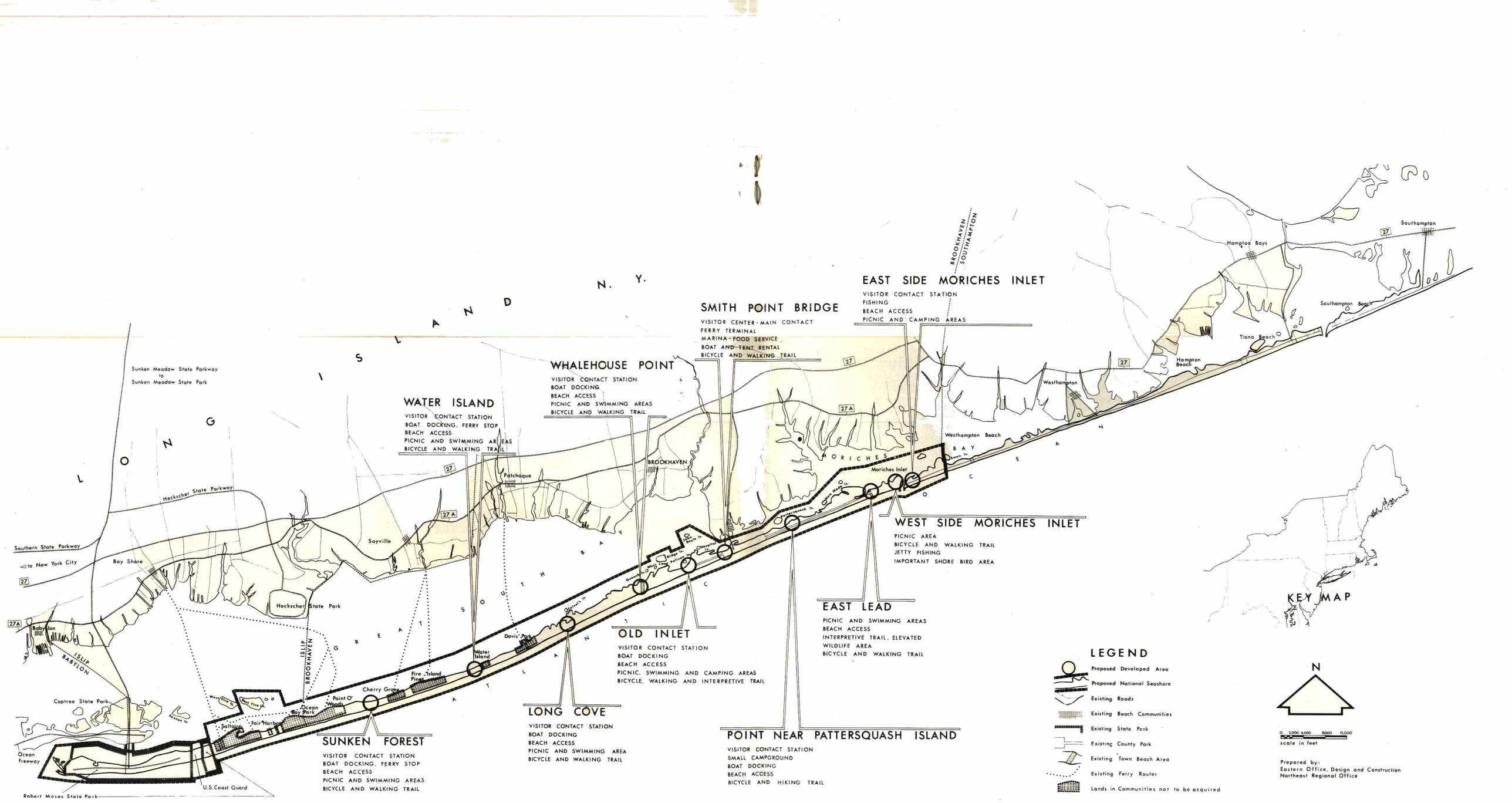
Shore Protection Problem

Barrier beaches grow as eroded material is transported to and along the shore by waves and longshore currents. For a barrier beach to build itself above the level of the sea, onshore winds and vegetation must combine to form sand dunes and bind them in place. Seasonal variations always modify this tenuous relationship.

Barrier beaches are subject to alteration in a gradual way. They build up during the calm weather of summer and erode during violent winter storms. Violent oceanic storms and hurricanes periodically cause catastrophic changes. During these latter storms—fortunately infrequent--long sections of beach may be eroded away, dunes breached and flattened by the waves, and new inlets opened across the barrier strip to the bay beyond.

On Fire Island, as on most barrier reefs along the Atlantic Coast, man fights a never-ending battle against the sea. Built up by winds and waves, barrier beaches are relatively stable when bound by vegetation but are always vulnerable to severe storm action. They protect the mainland from the brunt of such storms and also form and protect the shallow, productive bays between them and the mainland. Major storms buffet and often destroy homes or other structures built on these narrow sand strips. Such has been the case here.

Congress has recognized that the protection and stabilization of coastal areas are in the national interest. The Corps of Engineers has been designated as the Federal agency responsible for this function. A Corps of Engineers report concerning the protection of the coast from Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point was prepared in 1958. As a result of this report, a cooperative beach erosion control project for this area was authorized by the Congress in the 1960 Rivers and Harbors Act. Construction of this project has not yet begun.



PROPOSED FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

SUGGESTED BOUNDARY AND DEVELOPMENT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



Sparse as they may seem wisps of grass such as these fight a successful war against wind and wave in natural areas along our entire coastline.

PROPOSED NATIONAL SEASHORE

The proposed National Seashore would include all of Fire Island, plus 1.4 miles of shore to the east of Moriches Inlet. The boundaries would extend a distance of 1,000 feet into the Atlantic Ocean and up to 4,000 feet into Great South Bay and Moriches Bay. Some nearby islands on the bayside would also be included within the seashore boundary.

Under this proposal, the designated communities on Fire Island would remain undisturbed. Private improved property and vacant lands within these communities could be retained nd developed by the owners, in accordance with zoning standards approved by the Secretary of the Interior. Improved property outside these communities could also be retained by the owners subject to the same conditions.

The suggested boundary would include the Robert Moses State Park and the Smith Point County Park within the National Seashore. These areas are already developed for intensive recreation use and would complement the extensive or low density recreation use that would be encouraged in those portions of the National Seashore to be preserved in their natural condition. Also, the National Seashore boundary includes sufficient bay and ocean waters with submerged lands to protect and preserve their natural values.

Land Use Plan

The recreation resources of Fire Island would be developed and managed for maximum public use, consistent with the protection objectives. This means that a balance would be achieved as between intensive (high density) and extensive (low density) recreation use. An important management objective would be the protection of the natural values of the area.

Beach use would be intensive at the existing State and county parks. Under the plans for a National Seashore these two public beach areas could continue under their present administration or, with the consent of the governing body, be conveyed to the Federal Government.



Beach building -Smith Point County Park.

In direct contrast to the high-density use provided at the State and county parks and in front of communities, the undeveloped portions of the National Seashore would provide a visitor with a different type of recreational experience--an opportunity to walk through and examine a virgin holly forest with trees several hundred years old; to see and study the plant life of the barrier beach, with its true seaside plants and the other coastal plain flora; to explore the marshes and waters of the bayside; to walk the beach; to fish in the ocean; bicycle or hike over interpretive trails; or to hunt in season in open areas.

The aesthetic qualities of this seashore provide inspiring scenes of ocean, strand, dune, marsh, forest, and bay for the artist and photographer.

Visitor contact stations would be developed at strategic points within the National Seashore. To assure access to the beach, the Federal Government would acquire a strip of land along the ocean in front of each of the communities. Boat docking facilities, ferry stops, picnic areas, bicycle and hiking trails, camping areas, wildlife areas, and jetty fishing would be provided on the bay side of the Island.

Access and Circulation

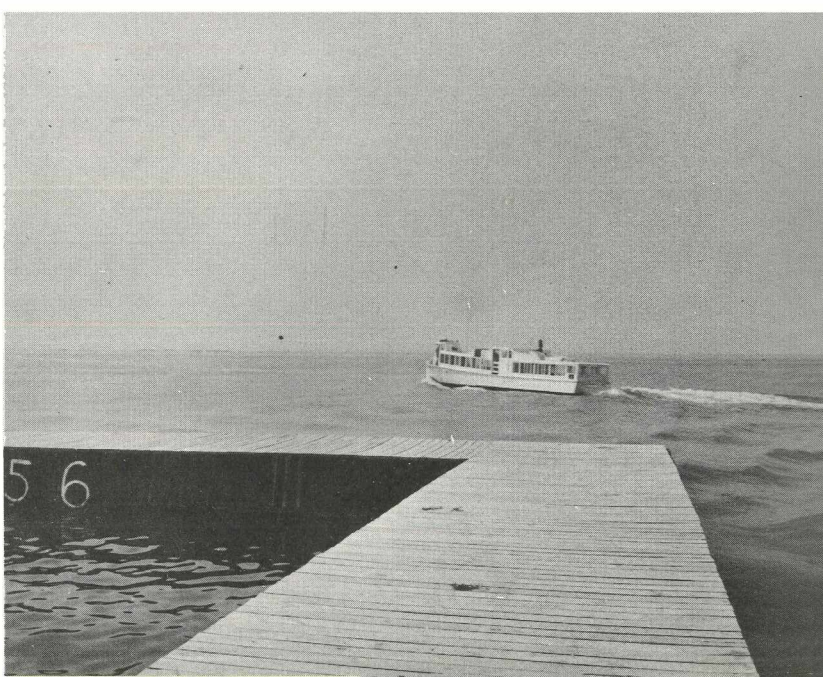
The only existing vehicular access to the major portion of the proposed National Seashore is at Smith Point County Park, via the bridge which connects the William Floyd Parkway on Long Island with Fire Island. Here, adjacent to the bridge and Smith Point County Park, is an appropriate location for the principal entrance point and visitor center for the National Seashore.

Roads are not envisioned as a means of circulation at the Fire Island National Seashore. Further access to and from the various portions of the Seashore would be accomplished in two ways. One form of visitor access would be by means of a stabilized trail system, which would originate at the main visitor center near Smith Point County Park and extend westward, eventually to the Robert Moses State Park.

This trail would be designed to accommodate those wishing to see the National Seashore on foot and by bicycle. It would permit interpretive tours of the barrier beach, bringing visitors to the designated visitor areas. The trail would meander generally on the bayside, through the backdunes, the marshes and reeded areas, and, possibly through the use of elevated boardwalks, to an adjacent island.

Self-guiding devices, such as trailside exhibits, would identify and explain the origin and significance of the natural history features that occur along the way. In addition markers would give added meaning to other interesting features.

The second form of visitor access would be by ferry. A ferry terminal and boat marina would be included as part of the main visitor center near Smith Point County Park. It would be designed not only to accommodate the ferries but also to provide additional space for visitors wishing to visit the National Seashore by private craft. Ferry docks and boat tie-up facilities would be provided at each of the developed areas in the National Seashore. A shuttle ferry service to connect all the visitor areas on the Island would be provided. This would provide access to those portions of the Island which are not located adjacent to the State and county parks.

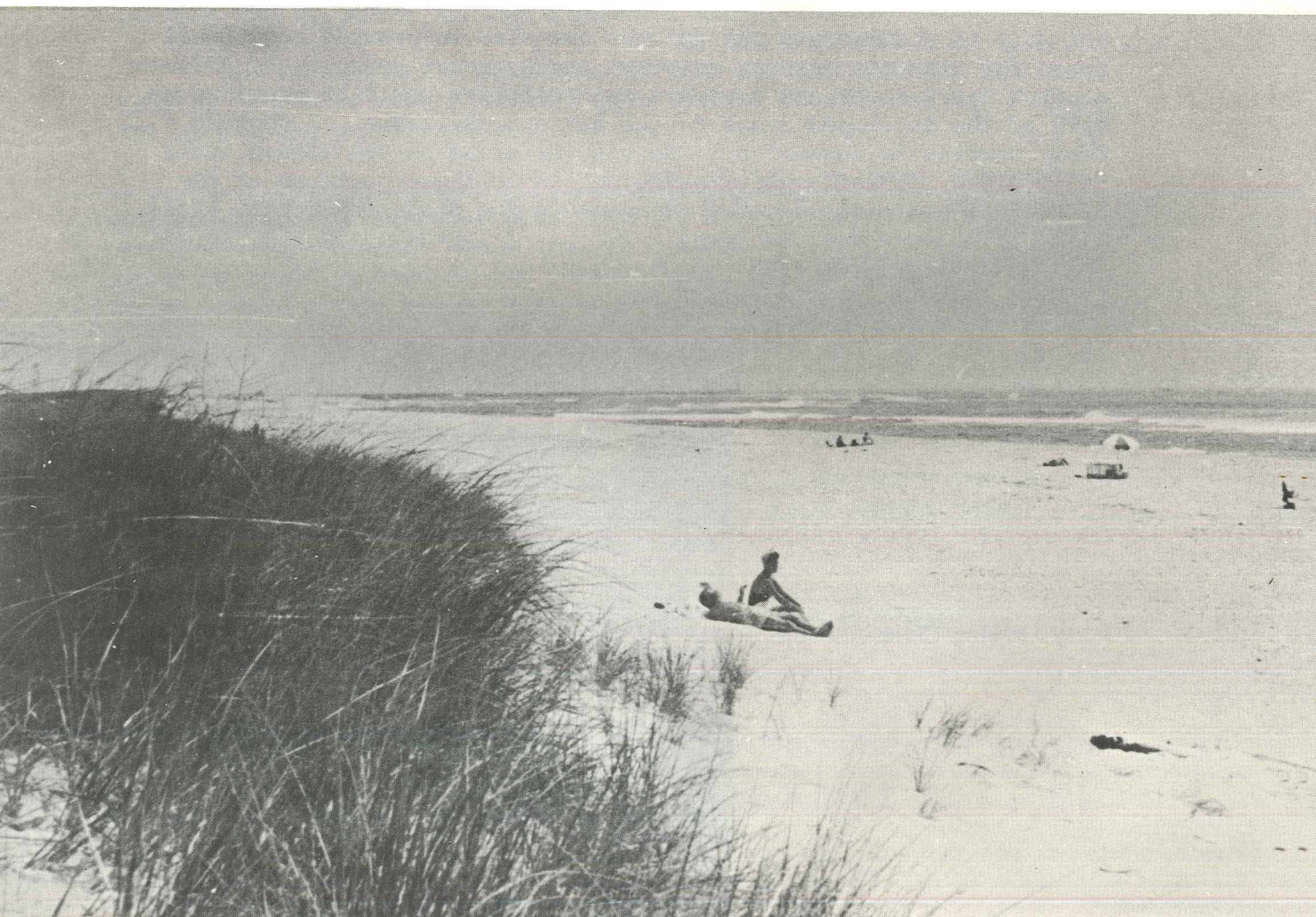


Ferry leaving Ocean Beach

Bicycles could be rented from a concessioner at the main developed area. Trips varying in length from a few miles to the entire length of the National Seashore could be arranged. Those planning bicycle and hiking trips would have the option of returning by the same method or by ferries from one of the five ferry stops west of the main developed area. East of Smith Point County Park a short section of paved road is planned to connect the county park road with a small campground and parking area to be developed opposite Pattersquash Island. From this point the bicycle and hiking trail would continue to Moriches Inlet, passing many interesting features on this eastern segment of the Island. Ferry stops are also planned at three locations east of Smith Point County Park.

Bathing Beaches

Excellent beaches occur along the entire length of the proposed National Seashore. It is suggested that provision for swimming be made at eight of the developed areas. Facilities would be modest, consisting of beach access, lifeguard protection, and picnic areas, together with bathhouses and visitor contact stations.





Shore Fishing

Fishing, clamming, and crabbing are important recreational uses of the ocean bays, beaches, and inlets of the proposed National Seashore. A boat rental service at the main developed area would accommodate those wishing to fish the bays adjacent to the proposed area. The interpretive walking - bicycle trail and ferry service would provide access to Moriches Inlet for jetty fishing and to the more remote stretches of the ocean beaches for surf fishing.

Hunting

Fire Island is located on the Atlantic Flyway and a large number of ducks and geese can be found here. Since it is a policy to allow hunting in National Seashores, waterfowl hunting will be permitted in designated areas in accordance with Federal and State laws.

Camping Facilities

It is the usual policy in areas managed by the National Park Service to provide campgrounds when they are essential for proper use of and enjoyment of the area, and where there is adequate space to accommodate them without serious encroachment upon or damage to important natural or scenic values. Because of the limited area available on Fire Island, overnight camping is suggested initially at only two locations, one near Pattersquash Island and one other at Old Inlet. Individual campsites would be comparatively small and visitor use would be on a restricted time-use basis. In the future, small campgrounds might also be provided east of Moriches Inlet.

Interpretation

To enable the visitor to recognize, understand, and appreciate more fully the values of the proposed Fire Island National Seashore, an active interpretation and education program would be initiated. Included in the visitor center would be museum displays, exhibits, and information counters. A nature center is recommended for the Sunken Forest area, with conducted nature walks and self-guiding interpretive trails at two other locations along the National Seashore as an adjunct to the hiking-bicycle trail. Orientation talks and audio-visual devices would comprise an important part of the visitor services at the visitor center and at the Sunken Forest area.

Shore Protection

The Corps of Engineers has prepared a plan for the protection of Fire Island. This plan was designed to provide maximum protection for the existing development and future residential development that would take place if the major portions of Fire Island remained in private ownership. This plan did not anticipate the establishment of a National Seashore for the purposes of retaining much of the land in its natural condition. If Congress authorizes a National Seashore, the existing development still will need maximum protection, but a lesser degree of protection may be sufficient to protect the natural areas that will be retained. If a National Seashore is established, it is anticipated that the National Park Service and the Corps of Engineers can mutually agree on a plan for protecting both developed and undeveloped lands on Fire Island.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the report's findings, it is recommended that:

1. A Fire Island National Seashore be established to preserve the 33 miles of seashore extending from Fire Island Inlet on the west to the Brookhaven--Southampton town line on the east.

2. The boundaries of the National Seashore encompass all of Fire Island, plus 1.4 miles of county lands to the east of Moriches Inlet, and the nearby bay side islands, and extend a distance of 1,000 feet into the Atlantic Ocean and up to 4,000 feet into Great South Bay and Moriches Bay, as shown on the boundary and development map.

3. The National Park Service be designated as the agency to administer the National Seashore.

4. The Federal Government acquire the beach area along the Atlantic Ocean in front of all communities to assure unrestricted public access to the beach.

5. The National Seashore be developed and managed for both intensive and extensive use; the undeveloped portions of Fire Island be set aside for protection of natural values and activities compatible with this preservation objective; intensive use be concentrated at the two areas readily accessible from the mainland of Long Island--Robert Moses State Park and Smith Point County Park; and the development of private supporting facilities for food, lodging, and other services be limited to the adjacent portions of Long Island and the existing communities on Fire Island.

6. The undeveloped stretches of land between the currently developed communities be maintained and managed in their natural state.

7. The Robert Moses State Park continue to be administered by the New York State Department of Conservation in coordination with the National Park Service, unless New York wishes to convey this area to the Federal Government.

8. The Smith Point County Park continue under Suffolk County and be administered in coordination with the National Park Service unless the county wishes to convey this area to the Federal Government.

9. Passenger ferries continue to transport people back and forth across the Great South Bay from the mainland of Long Island. Additional ferries may be needed including shuttle ferry service to transport visitors from one access point to another along the bay side of Fire Island. Docking and service facilities should be provided at the designated visitor access points.

10. Foot trails and bicycle paths be provided as the major means of travel on Fire Island; no road be built the length of Fire Island; automobile access to the Island be restricted to the existing bridgeheads and parking areas at the State and county parks and such additional parking areas as may be developed therein by agreement between the Federal, State, and county governments.

11. The Department of the Interior not acquire improved private property if zoning standards are met which are acceptable to local authorities and the Secretary of the Interior. Also, that non-Federal public land in the National Seashore not be acquired unless the local governing authorities wish to convey these lands to the Federal Government.

12. All unimproved private lands within the National Seashore be acquired except for such lands within the boundaries of certain designated communities. It is not proposed that undeveloped lands within existing communities be acquired but that private development of these lands be permitted in accordance with zoning bylaws approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

13. For those improved private properties lying outside the designated communities, the owners may retain up to three acres of land, exclusive of land needed for public beach access.

14. Hunting and fishing, including shellfishing, be permitted under applicable Federal and State laws.

15. Since Congress already has granted specific authority to the Corps of Engineers for shore protection along Fire Island, plans of the Corps for such protection be mutually acceptable to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Army.

RELATIONSHIP TO CRITERIA FOR NATIONAL RECREATION AREAS

On April 27, 1962, the President established the Recreation Advisory Council by Executive Order. This Council is composed of the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Defense, Commerce, and Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency. Among its functions, the Council is responsible for advising Federal agencies with respect to protection and appropriate management of scenic areas, natural wonders, primitive areas, historic sites, and recreation areas of national significance.

On March 26, 1963, the Recreation Advisory Council promulgated its Policy Circular No. 1, "Federal Executive Branch Policy Governing the Selection, Establishment, and Administration of National Recreation Areas." The paper sets forth primary and secondary criteria for the selection of National Recreation Areas, which include National Seashores.

The proposed Fire Island National Seashore qualifies as a high-priority addition to the system of National Recreation Areas. It represents one of the few remaining opportunities for developing additional seashore recreation facilities along the densely populated eastern coastal areas of the United States. A review of the recreation value of this proposed development shows that it qualifies under all of the primary criteria and the applicable secondary criteria set forth in the policy paper. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Spacious Area - the proposed Fire Island National Seashore consists of about 5,700 acres of land plus several thousand acres of water and adjacent marshland. Because it is a narrow coastal and insular strip, it qualifies for exemption from the 20,000-acre minimum area criterion.

High Carrying Capacity in Relation to Type of Recreation Served - the proposed National Seashore would have a high carrying capacity in relation to the type of recreation to be served. It would receive an estimated 6 million annual visits initially.

Significant Recreation Opportunity - the proposed National Seashore would protect for public use some of the Nation's finest beaches. These are in close proximity to the largest population concentration in the United States.

Requires Federal Participation - land acquisition costs are estimated at $16 million. An investment of this magnitude is not likely to be made to insure the planned type of public use of this area without Federal participation.

Nearness to Other Federally Provided Recreation Facilities - there are no significant Federal recreation facilities available for day and weekend use in the area.

Includes Scarce and Disappearing Resources - according to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission report, ocean shoreline is one of the Nation's recreation resources most in demand and it is one of the most scarce in public ownership. The situation is extremely acute near large cities. New York's only extensive remaining ocean front suitable for public recreation purposes is in Suffolk County. There, some 60 miles of shoreline are relatively undeveloped. Thirty-three miles of this are recommended for inclusion in the proposed Fire Island National Seashore.

Compatibility With Other Public Recreation Planning Efforts and The Use of Private Recreation Facilities - the relatively undeveloped National Seashore would effectively compliment the intensively developed nearby State and county parks.

Strategically Located - the west end of Fire Island is within 50 miles of the center of New York City. At present, more than 41 million people in several States live within a 250-mile radius.

Primary Purpose - the dominant purpose to be served is the provision of diverse seashore recreation opportunities for the public.

High-Priority Recreation Needs - public demand for seashore recreation opportunities will not be met by other Federal and State programs or private developments in the immediate area. Without public acquisition, the remaining undeveloped portions of Fire Island will be subdivided for private cottages and other uses and lost to public use.

The proposed Fire Island National Seashore also meets the following secondary criteria:

Location in Densely Populated United States Census Divisions - the proposed Fire Island National Seashore is located within the Middle Atlantic Census Division, the most densely populated census division of the United States.

Nearness to Other Federally Provided Recreation Facilities - There are presently no significant Federal recreation facilities available for day and weekend use by the population that would be served by the proposed Fire Island National Seashore.

Includes Scarce and Disappearing Resources - ORRRC Study Report No. 4, "Shoreline Recreation Resources of the United States," shows that of 59,000 miles of total shoreline along the Atlantic Coast, 9,961 miles, or 17 percent, has recreation potential of which 1,765 miles, or three percent of the total, is in beach formations. Only 3.4 percent of the recreation shoreline is in public ownership of all categories.

Compatibility With Other Public Recreation Planning Efforts and the Use of Private Recreation Facilities - The proposed Fire Island National Seashore would effectively complement State and county efforts for providing expanded facilities for public recreation use. The availability of relatively undeveloped areas adjacent to the State and county parks on the Island would provide an additional recreation outlet for visitors to these two areas. Likewise, a National Seashore would increase the recreation values of existing private facilities on or adjacent to the Island. The Fire Island National Seashore proposal would allow the Federal Government, with the consent of the State or county, to assume responsibility for the recreation areas now under their respective jurisdictions, if this should be deemed desirable.